

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The New Hampshire Department of Education requires a higher level of accountability for teachers to address both school/district goals and individual goals that promote greater student achievement.

Professional Development: A Definition

Professional development is the learning that occurs for adults so that they may create environments where all students can achieve high standards. Professional development is primarily focused on specific curriculum content, effective instructional practice, and methods and strategies to assess student learning.¹

This Professional Development Master Plan is intended to provide direction, guidance, and resources to educators as they develop their Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). We believe that “effective professional development is on-going, school based and organized around collaborative problem solving.”²

Statement of Purpose

SAU #53 serves five distinct school districts: Allenstown, Chichester, Deerfield, Epsom and Pembroke. Each district has its own unique context and needs, and functions separately from the others. As such, there needs to be a balance between uniformity of process, and respect for the diversity of the member districts. *Each district has its own Local Education Improvement Plan (LEIP) or Strategic Plan.* These plans evolved from a discussion among stakeholders in the educational community including teachers, specialists, administrators, support staff, para-professionals, school board members, parents, and members of the community at large. Each individual’s professional development plan must support the district’s objectives and the goals set out in the school’s improvement plan, as well as meet the requirements set forth by the State. The result will be a coordinated, focused effort with all educators working towards the common goal of growth and learning for all students.

This document will set out the process and context within which professional development will occur. State requirements will be articulated; necessary links between individual plans and district efforts will be indicated; and required documentation will be presented in compliance with Ed 512 (Appendix IA).

Most significantly, the success of this master plan will be reflected in improved student achievement. Professional skills must develop and evolve to support the learning needs of our student population that are focused on students becoming **effective communicators, problem solvers, community contributors, and life-long, self directed learners.**

¹ New Hampshire Department of Education, Professional Development Planning ToolKit, Glossary, August 1999.

² Mather, MaryAnne, Professional Development Curriculum Administrator, February 2000, p.52.

Professional Development: Guiding Principles

Professional development is viewed as a necessary and continuous effort to improve district programs by involving all educators in activities that enhance their performance, knowledge and attitudes. The focus is to develop knowledge and skills in teachers in order to impact student achievement.

Priorities and goals relative to program and professional development should be data-driven, with decisions based upon objective evidence gathered over time.

Professional development efforts should be linked to district goals to support the improvement of the whole system and thus lead to increased student learning.

Professional development efforts should also be focused on enhancing the individual's knowledge of their field and knowledge of learners and learning. To this end, there must be an on-going assessment process, including self-evaluation and feedback from others, to guide further development.